

J O U R N A L

OF THE REV.

Dr. Coke's Visit to Jamaica,

—K—
AND OF HIS

THIRD TOUR

ON THE

CONTINENT OF AMERICA.



L O N D O N:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR M,DCC,LXXXIX.—

A JOURNAL, &c.

ON the 19th of January I landed at Port-Royal in Jamaica. When I landed, Mr. Fishley, Master Calker of the harbour, to whom I brought a letter of recommendation, received me with every mark of kindness and respect, and introduced me the next day to Mr. Bull and Mr. Treble of Kingston, who proved my very valuable friends. In Mr. Tieble's house I preached four times, to small, but increasing congregations. At last, a gentleman of great benevolence (Mr. Burn, a Roman Catholic) observing the inconveniences the congregation was put to, in Mr. Treble's small, though neat house (which would have been large enough, I doubt not, for all the inhabitants of Kingston, if it had been as large as his heart) most generously offered me the use of a very large room in one of his houses, which room has been frequently used as a public Concert-room, and is the largest but one in the whole town.

The first evening I preached there, the congregation was considerable, and received the word with great decency, and great attention. Whilst I was pointing out to the unregenerate, the fallaciousness of all their hopes, and the impossibility of reversing the decree, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and seriously enquiring of them whether they had found out some new gospel as their directory, a poor Negro-woman cried out, "I am sure you are a new Priest." The second evening the great room and all the piazzas around it were crowded with people. I believe there were four hundred Whites present, the largest number of Whites I ever preached to at one time in the West Indies, and about two hundred Negroes, there being no room, I think, for more. After I had preached about ten minutes, a company of gentlemen, inflamed with liquor,



liquor, began to be very noisy: till at last, the noise still increasing, they cried out, "Down with him, down with him." They then pressed forwards through the crowd in order to seize me, crying out again, "Who seconds that fellow?" On which my new, but gallant friend Mr. Bull, stepped forth between the rioters and me, saying, "I second him against men and devils." A lady also of great worth, who in her younger years had been a member of our Society in London, but through the various vicissitudes of life was now a resident of Jamaica, who had lately been dangerously ill, and during her illness, when all her former religious impressions returned with all their weight to her mind, had received a clear manifestation of the pardoning love of God--notwithstanding all the delicacy of her sex, and her own peculiar amiableness of disposition, stood up, and reasoned with the rioters on the impropriety of their conduct. They now, I believe, were convinced that nine out of ten of the congregation disapproved of their behaviour, and gave up the contest, still crying as they descended the stair-case, "Down with him, down with him."

The spirits of the congregation were so deranged by this unhappy incident, that I gave out a hymn, and then chose a new text, and preached a sermon with some degree of liberty, I bless God, to a serious, attentive audience.

Having now received a message from the Captain of the Brig in which I had taken a Passage for Charleston, desiring me to repair to Port-Royal in order to go on board, I returned to that little town, where I preached three sermons, which many of the white people attended, the Blacks in that place not seeming to regard the gospel.

I am fully satisfied that great good might be done in this island, if the gospel was regularly preached here with power. A small Society of awakened persons might even at present be formed both among the Whites and Blacks in Kingston.

Indeed this valuable and populous island demands and deserves much of our attention and exertions, as it probably contains above 300,000 inhabitants, the slaves alone, in the year 1768, amounting to 217,000; and in Kingston only they have nearly doubled since that time.

This I must add in honour of the island, that I never visited any place either in Europe or America, in which the gospel was not preached, where I received so many civilities as I did in Jamaica, four or five families of property having opened to me their houses, and, very evidently, their hearts also, and assured me that any Missionaries we shall in future send to that island, shall be welcome to beds and every thing their houses afford.

On the 24th of February I landed at Charleston. Mr. Asbury had arrived there several days before from the North in order to meet me; but set off three hours before I landed to be present at the Conference in Georgia. The next day I followed, and riding in two days as much as he had in three, overtook him. The first day we rode forty-seven miles, for about two miles of which our horses were up to their bellies in water, with two great invisible ditches on the right and left. Our Elder stationed at Charleston, accompanied me.

One of the grandest objects to be seen in this country, is the fires in the woods in the spring. The inhabitants set fire to the grass and little shrubs, in order to burn up the dry leaves which cover the ground, that the grass which grows up afterwards may be accessible to the cattle. Late one evening I saw the most astonishing illumination, I think, I ever beheld in my life, whilst I was travelling through the woods. I seemed surrounded with great, extensive fires: and question whether the King of France's Stag-hunt in his Forest by night, which he sometimes has given to his nobility, would be more wonderful or entertaining to a philosophic eye. Sometimes the fire catches the oozing

oozing turpentine of the pine-trees, and blazes to the very top. I have seen old, rotten pine-trees all on fire: the trunks, and the branches (which looked like so many arms,) were full of visible fire, and made a most grotesque appearance.

The weather was as cold, as it had been, according to the information of the people, in any part of the winter, and was felt by me just come from the torrid zone, with peculiar severity. Although I clothed myself almost from top to toe with flannel, I could but just bear the cold. We had congregations all the way, after I met Mr. Asbury; but our journeys in the back parts of South Carolina and Georgia were frequently very trying. Sometimes we lost our way. In one instance we lost twenty-one miles. A great part of the way we had nothing in the houses of the Planters but bacon and eggs, and Indian corn bread. Mr. Asbury brought with him tea and sugar, without which we should have been badly off indeed. In several places we were obliged to lie on the floor, which indeed I regarded not, though my bones were a little sore in the morning. The Preachers in Europe know but little, in the present state of Methodism, of the trials of two thirds of the Preachers on this Continent. And yet in (what I believe to be) a proper view of things, the people in this country enjoy greater plenty and abundance of the mere necessaries of life, than those of any country I ever knew, perhaps any country in the world. For I have not in my three visits to this Continent, in all of which I have rode about 5,600 miles, either met with, or heard of, any white men, women or children, that have not had as much bacon, Indian corn, and fuel for fire, as they wanted, and an abundance to spare: nor are they badly off for clothing.

The great revival however, and the great rapidity of the work of God, the peculiar consolations of God's Spirit which he has favoured me with, and the retirement I met with in these

vast Forests, far overbalanced every trial. Many other circumstances also amply compensated for the disagreeable parts of my journey. Sometimes a most noble Vista of half a mile or a mile in length, would open between the lofty Pines. Sometimes the tender fawns and hinds would suddenly appear, and, on seeing or hearing us, would glance through the woods, and vanish away. Frequently indeed we were obliged to lodge in houses built with round logs, and open to every blast of wind, and sometimes were under the necessity of sleeping three in a bed. Often we rode sixteen or eighteen miles without seeing a house, or human creature but ourselves, and often were obliged to ford very deep and dangerous rivers, or creeks (as they are here called.) Many times we ate nothing from seven in the morning till six in the evening; tho' sometimes we carried refreshments with us, and partook of our temperate repast on stumps of trees in the woods near some spring or stream of water.

On the 9th of March we began our Conference in Georgia. Here we proposed (as we have ever since, in each of the Conferences) that Mr. Wesley's name should be inserted at the head of our small annual Minutes, and also in the form of discipline: in the small Minutes as the fountain of our Episcopal office, and in the form of discipline as the father of the whole work under the divine guidance. To this all the Conferences have cheerfully and unanimously agreed. We have 2,011 in Society in the state of Georgia: the increase in the last year has been 784. At this Conference we agreed to build a College in Georgia; and our principal friends in this state have engaged to purchase at least 2,000 acres of good land for its support: for this purpose there was 12,500 pounds weight of Tobacco subscribed in one congregation, which will produce, clear of all expences, about 100l. sterling. We have engaged to erect it, God willing, within five years, and do most humbly intreat Mr. Wesley to permit us to name it Wesley-College,

College, as a memorial of his affection for poor Georgia, and of our great respect for him.

On the 17th we opened our Conference in Charleston, for the state of South Carolina. My congregations were very large in this city, as well as Mr. Asbury's, and great liberty the Lord was pleased to give me. We were bitterly attacked in the public papers, but our mild answer, I believe, did us more service, than the illiberal attempts of our persecutors did us hurt. In this State we have 3377 in Society: the increase is 907. In my way from this city I preached three sermons in a small town called George-Town, in the Court-house, where most of the principal people of the neighbourhood attended every time, and heard with deep attention, though we never had any Society or regular preaching there. As the pious master and mistress of the house where I was most hospitably entertained, with their truly religious daughter (though but young,) were desirous of partaking of the Lord's supper, I administered it in their dwelling-house; and gave permission to any serious persons of the congregation, who desired it, to communicate with us: in consequence of which, near twenty well-dressed persons (chiefly women, and some of them, as I was afterwards informed, women of property) all of whom had seriousness engraved on their countenances, joined us in that holy ordinance. In this part of the country I met with a sweet potatoe, which, when roasted, eats exactly like a roasted apple, and can hardly be distinguished from mellow apples in pies or puddings: how bountiful is Providence! I am daily filled with surprise, in meeting with such large congregations as I am favoured with in the midst of vast wildernesses, and wonder from whence they come. O that God may grant me the only hire I desire for my labours—the salvation of souls!

On the 11th of April we opened our Conference for the state of North Carolina at the house of

of a Planter in the country (Brother M'Knight) on the borders of a fine river called the Yeadkin. Nineteen Preachers met us there, some of whom came from the other side of the great Alleghany-mountains. The numbers in this State are 6,779 : the increase 741. We here received most reviving letters concerning the progress of the work in Kentucke, the new Western World (as we call it.) In these letters our friends in that country earnestly intreat to have a College built for the education of their Youth, offering to give or purchase three or four thousand acres of good land for its support. We debated the point, and sent them word, that if they will provide 5,000 acres of fertile ground, and settle it on such Trustees as we shall mention under the direction of the Conference, we will undertake to complete a College for that part of our connection within ten years.

In travelling from this Conference to Virginia, we were favoured with one of the most beautiful prospects I ever beheld. The country, as far as we could see from the top of a hill, was ornamented with a great number of Peach-orchards, the Peach-trees being all in full blossom, and displaying a diversity of the most pleasing colours, blue, purple, and violet. On the opposite side of a beautiful vale which lay at the foot of the hill, ran the river Yeadkin, reflecting the rays of the sun from its broad, placid stream: and the mountains which bounded the view, formed a very fine back ground for the compleating of the prospect. The two days following we rode on the ridge of a long hill, with a large vale on each side, and mountains rising above mountains for twenty, and sometimes, I suppose, forty miles on each hand.

In Halifax-County (Virginia) where I met with much persecution four years ago, almost all the great people of the county came in their chariots and other carriages to hear me, and behaved with great propriety: there were not less than five Colonels in the congregation. On the 18th we opened

opened our first Conference for the State of Virginia in the town of Petersburgh, and both in the public and private meetings the Lord was very present with us. Thirteen Preachers were received on trial, all well recommended: in the former Conferences there was not a sufficient number of new Preachers to answer all our calls, but in this Conference every deficiency was supplied.

From Petersburgh we set off for our second Virginia-Conference, which we held in the town of Leesburgh, visiting Richmond by the way. At this Conference also we had a very comfortable time. The numbers in Society in Virginia this year, are 14,226: the increase, 2,023.

From Leesburgh we set off through Alexandria and Annapolis for Baltimore. At Alexandria I preached in the great Presbyterian Meeting-house which has been built in that town, and, praised be God, gave huge offence to the unregenerate rich, and great joy to the pious poor, by the testimony I then bore against sin.

At Annapolis in Maryland, after my last prayer on Sunday the 3d of May, the congregation began to pray and praise aloud in a most astonishing manner. At first I felt some reluctance to enter into the business: but soon the tears began to flow, and I think I have seldom found a more comforting or strengthening time. This praying and praising aloud is a common thing throughout Virginia and Maryland. What shall we say? Souls are awakened and converted by multitudes: and the work is surely a genuine work, if there be a genuine work of God upon earth. Whether there be wild-fire in it or not, I do most ardently wish, that there was such a work at this present time in England. In one Meeting in this State we have reason to believe that twenty souls received full sanctification; and it is common to have from twenty to fifty souls justified in a day, and in one place.

Our first Conference for the State of Maryland, begun in Baltimore on Tuesday the 4th, in which

we

we were all unanimous and truly affectionate. On the Wednesday evening after I had preached and Mr. Asbury exhorted, the congregation began to pray and praise aloud, and continued so to do till two o'clock in the morning. Out of a congregation of two thousand people, I suppose two or three hundred were engaged at the same time in praising God, praying for the conviction and conversion of sinners, or exhorting those around them with the utmost vehemence: and hundreds more were engaged in wrestling prayer for their own either conversion or sanctification. The great noise of the people soon brought a multitude to see what was going on, for whom there was no room in the Church, which has been lately built, and will hold a larger congregation than any other of our Churches in the States. One of our Elders was the means that night of the conversion of seven poor penitents within his little circle in less than fifteen minutes. Such was the zeal of many, that a tolerable company attended the preaching at five the next morning, notwithstanding the late hour at which they parted. The next evening Mr. Asbury preached, and again the congregation began as before, and continued as loud and as long as the former evening. And this praying and praising aloud has been common in Baltimore for a considerable time; notwithstanding our congregation in this town was for many years before, one of the calmest and most critical upon the Continent. Many also of our Elders who were the softest, most connected, and most sedate of our Preachers, have entered with all their heart into this work. And this must be allowed, that gracious and wonderful has been the change, our greatest enemies themselves being the judges, that has been wrought on multitudes, on whom this change begun at those wonderful seasons.

On Friday the 8th, we set off for our College, which is about twenty-eight miles from Baltimore. I was highly pleased with the progress they have made

made towards the compleating of the building : the situation delights me more than ever. There is not, I believe, a point of it, from whence the eye has not a view of at least twenty miles ; and in some parts the prospect extends even to fifty miles in length. The water-part forms one of the most beautiful views in the United States : the Chesapeak-bay in all its grandeur, with a fine navigable river (the Susquehanna) which empties itself into it, lying exposed to the view through a great extent of country.

During my stay at the College, I had several long conversations with Dr. Hall, our President, and am satisfied beyond a doubt that he is both the Scholar, the Philosopher, and the Gentleman : he truly fears God, and pays a most exact and delicate attention to all the rules of the institution. Our Classic Tutor is a very promising person : he is not yet the polished Scholar, like the President ; but his manifest strength of understanding, and persevering diligence, will soon, I doubt not, perfect every thing that is wanting. And our English and Mathematical master gives us considerable satisfaction.

On Saturday morning the 9th, I examined all the Classes in private : and in the afternoon we had a public exhibition of the different abilities and improvements of our young students. Two young men displayed great strength of memory, and great propriety of pronunciation, in the repetition of two chapters of Sheridan on Elocution, and were rewarded by Mr. Asbury, as a small testimony of our approbation, with a dollar apiece. One little boy, a son of Mr. Dallam, a neighbouring gentleman, delivered Memoriter, a fine speech out of Livy, with such an heroic spirit, and with such great propriety, that I presented to him a little piece of gold. Three other boys also so excelled in gardening, that Mr. Asbury rewarded them with a dollar each. But what is best of all, many of them are truly awakened. However, we were

were obliged to undertake the painful task, in the presence of the Trustees, Masters and Students, of solemnly expelling a young lad of fifteen years of age, to whose learning we had no objection, but whose trifling, irreligious conduct, and open ridicule, among the Students, of experimental religion, we could not pass over: as we are determined to have a College, in which religion and learning shall go hand in hand together, or to have none at all. But nothing relating to this institution perhaps has given me greater pleasure, than to find we are already enabled to support four Students fully, and two in part, (Preachers sons and orphans) on the charitable foundation.

On Wednesday the 14th, we opened our second Conference for the State of Maryland in Chestertown, where also we had nothing but love and unanimity. The numbers in Society in Maryland are 11,117: the increase, 1,107. On both the first and second days of the Conference, there was much praying and praising aloud in the congregation. The second day they began at three in the afternoon, immediately after the sacrament, so that we could not hold a Love-feast, as we intended; and continued till eight in the evening, when Brother Everitt, one of our Elders, preached. After preaching, whilst he was giving out his last hymn, they began again, and continued till eleven at night. A Lawyer who came there out of curiosity, and who is eminent for his good sense and great abilities in his profession, was constrained in the midst of this work to acknowledge to some who were near him, that he believed it proceeded from the interference of a divine Power.

On the 18th, we began our Conference in Philadelphia for the State of Pennsylvania, in which, as usual, we had perfect unanimity. The numbers in this State and in the little State of Delaware, in which two States the Circuits are so mixed that the numbers cannot easily be separated, are 2,000. There has been in these Districts a decrease on the whole

whole of fifty-six members. On the third evening we were favoured with some breathings of the Spirit, which, I hope, will prove the beginning of better days in this city.

There is a custom peculiar to the American-Preachers, which is this: if there be more Preachers than one in a congregation, the Preachers that have not preached, give each of them a warm exhortation. And as far as I can judge by external effects wrought on the congregations, and by consequent enquiry and information, more good has been done in most instances by the exhortations than by the sermon: more souls have been awakened and converted to God.

In our Conference which began in Trenton on the 23d, for the State of New Jersey, all the Preachers seemed full of love. The few friends we have in this town, did every thing, I believe, that they could conceive, to make us comfortable: but alas! the work is, and ever has been, at a very low ebb in this place. The numbers in Jersey, are 1,751: here also there has been a decrease of 295. This will necessarily happen sometimes in so extensive a work; yea, where the Ministers have been most faithful. Rotten members, be they ever so numerous, must be lopped off, or we should soon become like other men. We have three Indians in this District: and who knows but they are the first-fruits of a glorious harvest among that people.

On the 28th, we opened our last Conference in New-York for that State—a Conference, like the others, all peace and concord, Glory, glory be to God! In this city we have a great revival, and a great increase; in consequence of which we are going to build a second Church. In the country-parts of this State, Freeborn Garrison, one of our Presiding Elders, has been greatly blessed. He is endued with an uncommon talent for opening new places. With a set of inexperienced but zealous youths, he has not only carried our work in this

State as high as Lake Champlain, but has raised congregations in most of the States of New-England, and also in the little State of Vermont, within about a hundred miles of Montreal. The numbers in the State of New-York, are 2,004; the increase 900. The whole number in the United States, is 43,265, the whole increase, 6,111: which is very great, considering that not more than eight months or thereabouts have elapsed, since the last Conference. Of the above-mentioned number, 35,021 are Whites, 8,241 are Blacks, and three are Indians.

We have now settled our Printing-business, I trust, on an advantageous footing, both for the people individually, and the connection at large; as it is fixed on a secure basis, and on a very enlarged scale. The people will thereby be amply supplied with Books of pure divinity for their reading, which is of the next importance to preaching: and the profits of the Books are to be applied, partly to finish, and pay off the debt of our College; and, partly, to establish Missions and Schools among the Indians.

And through the blessing of God we are now determined to use our efforts to introduce the gospel among the Indians: in consequence of which, my indefatigable Brother, Mr. Asbury, is to set off soon for Fort-Pitt, where we are in the first instance to build a Church and School, as the grand Chief of a nation or tribe of Indians, who live not far from that Fort, and who are at peace with the States, has expressed an earnest desire of having Christian Ministers among his people. O that the day of God's visitation to those poor outcasts of men, may now be arrived!

On the 5th of June I took my leave of Mr. Asbury, the Preachers of the New-York District, and my other kind friends of New-York; and set off in the ship Union for Liverpool, at which Port we landed on the 10th of July. The Captain and crew were, at least in my presence, decent and well-behaved,

behaved, and the Captain himself very kind and attentive to please. Most of them had been brought up in the Presbyterian Church, and very cheerfully admitted morning and evening family-service, as well as a sermon every Lord's-day, and attended very regularly. Many of them joined us in singing hymns at the several services. But not one of them, I am afraid, is truly awakened, though I observed some of them reading the little books which I gave them with great attention; and a solemn spirit rested on the whole company, the last time I prayed with them.

Divine providence has favoured us with a quiet and pleasant voyage on the whole. My books, my papers, and, above all, fellowship with God, have made the whole way agreeable. Captain Cook's Voyages to the pacific ocean, and Captain Carver's Travels among the Indian nations in North America, afforded me great entertainment. But what an awful observation is that of Mr. Foster's, who published a Journal of his Voyage with Captain Cook, the second time the Captain sailed round the World! "It is," says he, "unhappy enough, that the unavoidable consequence of all our Voyages of discovery, has always been the loss of a number of innocent lives: but this heavy injury done to the little uncivilized communities which Europeans have visited, is trifling when compared to the irretrievable harm entailed upon them by corrupting their morals. If these evils" adds the benevolent writer, "were in some measure compensated by the introduction of some benefit in these countries, we might at least comfort ourselves, that what they lost on one hand, they gained on the other; but I fear that hitherto our intercourse has been wholly disadvantageous to the inhabitants of the South Seas."

What a pity it is, that the pure intentions of one of the best of Sovereigns, the great Patron of the Arts and Sciences; as well as all the expence of the different voyages; should thus be unaccompanied with any beneficial effect. But if the salvation of many souls was to be the glorious consequence, his Majesty and every person concerned that loves our Redeemer, would have a compensation indeed. And I might add, in respect to any temporal benefits that might arise either to the islands of the pacific ocean or to our own country: such an intercourse would necessarily be opened between them and us, if Missions for the establishment of the gospel among them were set on foot, and through the blessing of God succeeded, as would probably make any benevolent scheme of a civil or political kind, not only feasible, but easy.

On

On Saturday, July 4, some time before sun-set, I was indulged with one of the most delicious entertainments of the kind, I was ever favoured with; which was a set of the most grand and beautiful calm-clouds, as the sailors term them, I ever beheld, rising up on the edge of the horizon on the North. No pencil can describe, or tongue express their beauty. Being not far distant from the coast of Ireland, I apprehended for a moment that I discerned the most beautiful land-prospect, gilded over by the horizontal beams of the setting sun. The colours and appearances were so strong, and all the tints so very lively, that the imagination could with the utmost ease realize sloping hills, perpendicular rocks, magnificent turrets seated on beautiful eminences, and here and there an opening glade or lawn, and sometimes even a town or village. Those who are not acquainted with the seas, or have never minutely attended to the beauty and grandeur of these calm-clouds, have no conception of the pleasure I felt on the occasion; especially as my mind was enabled in some measure to ascend up to the celestial Limner, whose glory and handy-work were so visibly displayed before me. "But they were mere clouds," says the phlegmatic scorner. And what is the work of a Raphael, but canvas and paint? All is cloud, and vapour, but the enjoyment of God! In about half an hour the delightful scenery disappeared.

On the 8th in the morning, the Captain informed me that we had been in imminent danger the night before, from a very sudden and violent squall of wind on the Devonshire-coast, the ship having run in the night-time, through a mistake of the Captain, too far to the South, instead of sailing along the Irish Coast. Great, as it seems, the noise and alarm was on the occasion, I was fast asleep the whole time; but the Keeper of Israel neither slumbered nor slept.

On the 9th, we passed by the awful rock in the Irish channel, called the middle mouse, where two years ago, Mr. Wesley and myself with about ten of the Preachers, were nearly lost, our ship striking against the rock about forty times in about an hour and five minutes, and our deliverance appearing to have been a very extraordinary answer to prayer. O that the solemn providences of God, which have brought me many a time to the very jaws of a watery grave, and then slept in with saving power, may perfectly unfetter my soul from earth, and bring it through divine grace into the closest union with my God.

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